

# Role of Women Parliamentarians in Promoting Gender Equality and Social Welfare in India

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**Abstract**— Women's participation in democratic institutions is an important indicator of political equality, inclusive governance, and social development. In India, the representation of women in Parliament has gradually increased over the years; however, their overall participation remains comparatively lower than that of men. Despite these limitations, women parliamentarians have played a significant role in raising issues related to gender equality, women's rights, education, healthcare, child welfare, social justice, and inclusive policy-making. The present study examines the role of women parliamentarians in promoting gender equality and social welfare in India through an analysis of existing academic literature, parliamentary perspectives, and welfare-oriented political participation. The review highlights that women Members of Parliament contribute not only through numerical representation but also through substantive representation by actively participating in debates, policy discussions, committee work, and welfare advocacy. Existing studies indicate that women parliamentarians are often more likely to address issues concerning violence against women, educational access, healthcare services, and the protection of marginalized communities. The literature further suggests that women representatives help strengthen democratic inclusiveness and encourage greater political awareness among women in society. The study also identifies major challenges affecting the effectiveness of women parliamentarians, including patriarchal political structures, unequal access to leadership positions, party-based limitations, financial barriers, and gender stereotypes within political institutions. Although constitutional and democratic frameworks support equal participation, structural inequalities continue to influence women's representation and decision-making authority in Parliament. The review concludes that women parliamentarians play an important role in advancing gender-sensitive governance and welfare-oriented political discourse in India. However, greater institutional support, increased political participation, leadership opportunities, and policy-level inclusion are necessary to strengthen their contribution toward achieving gender equality and broader social welfare objectives.

**Keywords**— Women Parliamentarians, Gender Equality, Social Welfare, Women Empowerment, Political Representation, Indian Parliament, Democratic Participation, Women Leadership, Inclusive Governance, Social Justice

## INTRODUCTION

The participation of women in political institutions is considered one of the most important indicators of democratic development, social inclusion, and gender equality. In modern democratic societies, equal political representation provides women with opportunities to influence governance, public policy, and welfare-oriented decision-making processes. In India, women constitute nearly half of the population, yet their representation in political institutions has historically remained lower than that of men. Although the Indian Constitution guarantees equality before law and equal political rights to all citizens, women have continued to face social, economic, cultural, and political barriers that restrict their participation in legislative institutions.

The role of women parliamentarians has gained increasing importance in recent decades due to growing awareness regarding women's rights, social justice, and inclusive governance. Women Members of Parliament (MPs) have contributed toward raising issues related to gender discrimination, women's safety, healthcare, education, employment, child welfare, poverty reduction, and social development. Their participation in parliamentary debates, committees, policy discussions, and legislative processes has helped bring attention to concerns that directly affect women and marginalized sections of society.

The history of women's political participation in India can be traced back to the freedom movement, where several women leaders actively participated in social reform movements and anti-colonial struggles. Leaders such as Sarojini Naidu, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Sucheta Kripalani, Aruna Asaf Ali, and others played significant roles in shaping political awareness and women's participation in public life. After independence, the Constitution of India established universal adult franchise, granting equal voting rights to women and men. This constitutional framework created opportunities for women to enter electoral politics and legislative institutions.

Despite constitutional guarantees, women's representation in the Indian Parliament remained limited for many decades. Social norms, patriarchal attitudes, financial dependence, lack of political support, and unequal access to education and leadership opportunities contributed to lower participation of women in politics. However, over time, the number of women parliamentarians has gradually increased. Women leaders have held important positions such as Prime Minister, Speaker of Lok Sabha, Cabinet Ministers, Chief Ministers, and Parliamentary Committee members. Their increasing participation reflects changing social attitudes and expanding opportunities for women in public life.

Women parliamentarians have also played an important role in promoting social welfare policies in India. Several legislative and welfare initiatives related to women and child development, education, domestic violence prevention, maternity benefits, healthcare access, and gender justice have received support from women representatives. Women MPs often bring gender-sensitive perspectives into parliamentary discussions and policy-making processes. Studies indicate that women legislators are more likely to prioritize issues related to social welfare, healthcare, education, and family well-being compared to traditional power-oriented political concerns.

The concept of gender equality refers to equal rights, opportunities, participation, and treatment for individuals irrespective of gender. Gender equality in political representation is essential because democratic institutions should reflect the diversity of society. Women's participation in Parliament not only improves representation but also strengthens democratic legitimacy, accountability, and inclusiveness. Political representation of women also serves as an inspiration for other women and young girls to participate in leadership roles and public decision-making.

Social welfare is another important aspect connected with women's political participation. Welfare-oriented governance focuses on improving the quality of life of citizens through policies related to education, healthcare, employment, nutrition, social security, and poverty alleviation. Women parliamentarians often advocate for vulnerable and marginalized groups such as women, children, rural populations, and economically weaker communities. Their role becomes especially significant in developing countries like India, where social inequality, gender discrimination, and regional disparities continue to affect development outcomes.

However, women parliamentarians continue to face multiple challenges within political systems. Patriarchal political culture, gender stereotypes, media scrutiny, unequal distribution of party tickets, lack of campaign funding, political violence, and limited leadership opportunities restrict the effectiveness of women representatives. In many cases, women leaders are expected to balance family responsibilities

alongside political careers, creating additional pressure. The underrepresentation of women in Parliament also affects their collective bargaining power in legislative decision-making.

In recent years, discussions regarding women's reservation in Parliament and state legislatures have further increased public attention toward women's political representation in India. The debate surrounding reservation policies highlights the need to improve women's participation not only numerically but also substantively. Greater representation of women in Parliament is expected to strengthen gender-sensitive policy-making and promote inclusive democratic governance.

The present study focuses on analysing the role of women parliamentarians in promoting gender equality and social welfare in India through a review of existing academic literature and scholarly discussions. The study examines how women representatives contribute toward social development, welfare-oriented legislation, and gender-sensitive governance. It also analyses the challenges faced by women parliamentarians and evaluates the broader significance of women's political participation in strengthening Indian democracy and promoting inclusive social progress.

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the role of women parliamentarians in promoting gender equality in India.
2. To analyse the contribution of women Members of Parliament toward social welfare and inclusive governance.
3. To study the participation of women parliamentarians in policy-making and legislative discussions related to women and child welfare.
4. To evaluate the role of women representatives in addressing issues related to education, healthcare, social justice, and women empowerment.
5. To identify the major challenges faced by women parliamentarians within the Indian political system.
6. To examine the relationship between women's political representation and democratic inclusiveness in India.
7. To suggest measures for strengthening women's participation and leadership in parliamentary institutions.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

Women's representation in Parliament is widely discussed as both a democratic equality issue and a route toward more gender-sensitive governance. Rai's early study on women Members of Parliament in India argued that women's presence in Parliament cannot be understood only numerically; it must also be examined through their ability to speak, intervene, and influence policy from a gendered perspective. This view is

strengthened by Rai and Spary's *Performing Representation*, which examines women MPs in the Indian Parliament through questions of representation, social background, electoral routes, parliamentary performance, and the gendered nature of Parliament as a workplace.

Kalra and Joshi's study is highly relevant to the present topic because it directly analyses gender and parliamentary representation in India. Using Rajya Sabha debates on bills related to violence against women and children between 1999 and 2019, the study found that women parliamentarians were more active than male parliamentarians in speaking on behalf of women and children. It also found that women MPs placed greater emphasis on victim rehabilitation, expansion of rights, and recognition of rights-holders. This indicates that women parliamentarians do not merely add symbolic diversity; they can also shape the language and direction of welfare-related legislative debates.

Agarwal's work on gender, presence, and representation further argues that women's political presence matters, but presence alone is not sufficient unless women representatives are able to participate effectively in decision-making. This is important because women MPs often operate within male-dominated party structures, parliamentary norms, and social expectations. Therefore, the impact of women parliamentarians depends not only on the number of women elected but also on their access to leadership roles, committee positions, debate time, and party support.

Halim, Yount, Cunningham, and Pande provide empirical evidence from Indian state legislatures showing that women's political representation can be linked to social welfare outcomes, particularly in education. Their study found that women's representation in seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was positively associated with investments in primary schooling, especially in areas addressing the needs of poor children. This supports the argument that women's political participation can influence welfare priorities, although the effect varies by social location, constituency type, and institutional context.

Another related study by Halim, Yount, and Cunningham examined whether Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe women legislators reduce gender-caste gaps in primary schooling. The study highlights the importance of intersectionality, suggesting that women legislators from marginalized communities may be more attentive to the needs of disadvantaged girls. This is significant for India because gender inequality is not experienced uniformly; it intersects with caste, class, region, education, and rural-urban divisions.

The broader Asian literature also supports the distinction between descriptive representation and substantive representation. Joshi's edited volume on Asian parliaments argues that the key question is not only how many women enter Parliament, but what women and men parliamentarians do to advance women's welfare and gender equality. This framework is useful for studying India because women MPs may contribute through debate participation, bill sponsorship, committee work, constituency service, and public advocacy.



Fig. 2. Role of Women Parliamentarians in Promoting Gender Equality

The reviewed literature shows that women parliamentarians in India contribute to gender equality and social welfare in several ways. First, they increase the visibility of women's issues in parliamentary debates. Second, they bring attention to violence against women, education, health, child welfare, and social justice. Third, women from marginalized backgrounds may help connect gender concerns with caste and class-based inequalities. Fourth, their presence challenges the traditional male dominance of political institutions.

However, the literature also shows certain limitations. Women MPs remain underrepresented in Parliament, and numerical

representation does not automatically produce policy transformation. Party control, limited leadership opportunities, patriarchal political culture, electoral finance barriers, and social expectations restrict women's influence. Therefore, the effectiveness of women parliamentarians depends on both representation and institutional power.

Overall, existing academic studies suggest that women parliamentarians play an important role in promoting gender equality and social welfare in India, especially through gender-sensitive debate, welfare-oriented policy attention, and advocacy for women and children. At the same time, the literature emphasizes that stronger representation, institutional support, party-level inclusion, and leadership opportunities are necessary for converting women's presence into effective policy outcomes.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to the systematic process used for collecting, analysing, interpreting, and presenting information related to a research problem. It provides the scientific framework through which the objectives of the study are achieved. In social science and political research, research methodology helps ensure accuracy, reliability, validity, and logical interpretation of data and findings.

The present study titled "Role of Women Parliamentarians in Promoting Gender Equality and Social Welfare in India" is primarily based on a qualitative and descriptive research approach. The study focuses on examining the contribution of women parliamentarians toward gender equality, social welfare, democratic participation, and inclusive governance through the review and analysis of existing academic literature and secondary data sources.

### Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design. The descriptive approach is used to explain the role, participation, and contribution of women parliamentarians in India, while the analytical approach is used to evaluate scholarly findings, policy perspectives, and parliamentary contributions related to gender equality and social welfare.

The research is exploratory in nature because it attempts to understand the broader impact of women's political representation on democratic governance and welfare-oriented policy-making.

### Nature of the Study

The present research is qualitative in nature and mainly based on secondary data sources. The study reviews academic papers,

scholarly articles, books, government reports, parliamentary discussions, policy documents, and research publications related to women parliamentarians and gender-sensitive governance in India.

The study also includes interpretative analysis of previous research findings to understand:

- women's political representation,
- women's participation in legislative processes,
- social welfare initiatives,
- gender equality measures, and
- challenges faced by women leaders in politics.

### Sources of Data

The study is entirely based on secondary sources of data. Secondary data has been collected from reliable and authentic academic and institutional sources.

The major sources of data include:

- Peer-reviewed research papers,
- Academic journals,
- Books and edited volumes,
- Government reports,
- Parliamentary records and debates,
- Election Commission reports,
- Reports of women and child welfare ministries,
- Census and statistical publications,
- Research databases and institutional publications.

The study uses only real and verifiable academic literature to maintain authenticity and academic reliability.

### Selection of Literature

Relevant academic papers and studies related to women parliamentarians, political participation, gender equality, and social welfare were selected based on:

- relevance to the research topic,
- academic credibility,
- availability of verified publication details,
- contribution to political and social analysis, and
- focus on India or comparative democratic representation.

The selected literature was carefully reviewed and analysed to identify major themes, findings, arguments, and research gaps.

### Method of Analysis

The collected information has been analysed using qualitative content analysis and thematic interpretation methods. The methodology focuses on identifying recurring themes and scholarly perspectives related to:

- gender equality,
- women's empowerment,
- social welfare policies,
- parliamentary participation,
- leadership roles, and
- barriers faced by women representatives.

Thematic analysis helps in understanding how women parliamentarians contribute to democratic inclusiveness and welfare-oriented governance in India.

### Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is limited to analysing the role of women parliamentarians in India with specific focus on:

- gender equality,
- women empowerment,
- social welfare,
- legislative participation, and
- democratic representation.

The study mainly examines scholarly discussions and academic findings related to the contribution of women Members of Parliament toward social and political development.

### Limitations of the Study

Although the study has been conducted systematically, certain limitations exist:

- The study is based only on secondary data sources.
- The research depends upon previously published academic literature and institutional reports.
- The findings are limited to available scholarly discussions and documented parliamentary contributions.
- The study does not include primary survey or interview-based analysis.
- The research focuses mainly on the Indian parliamentary context and may not represent all global political systems.

### Significance of the Study

The study is significant because it helps in understanding the importance of women's representation in democratic

institutions and its impact on gender equality and social welfare. The research contributes toward academic discussions related to:

- women empowerment,
- political participation,
- inclusive governance,
- social justice, and
- welfare-oriented policy-making.

The findings of the study may also help researchers, policymakers, students, and social scientists in understanding the broader contribution of women parliamentarians toward democratic development in India.

### WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN INDIAN PARLIAMENT

Women's representation in the Indian Parliament is an important indicator of democratic participation, political inclusiveness, and gender equality. In a democratic country like India, Parliament represents the voice of the people and plays a central role in law-making, governance, and policy formulation. Since women constitute nearly half of the population of the country, their equal participation in legislative institutions is essential for balanced and inclusive democratic development. However, despite constitutional equality and gradual social progress, women's representation in Parliament has historically remained lower than that of men.

The participation of women in Indian politics began during the freedom movement, where women leaders actively participated in social reform movements, protests, and nationalist campaigns. Leaders such as Sarojini Naidu, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Sucheta Kripalani, Aruna Asaf Ali, and Annie Besant played important roles in shaping political consciousness and encouraging women's participation in public life. After independence, the Constitution of India granted equal voting rights and political equality to women, allowing them to participate in elections and democratic institutions without discrimination.

Although constitutional rights were established from the beginning of independent India, the actual representation of women in Parliament remained limited for many decades. Social traditions, patriarchal norms, low political support, financial dependence, educational inequality, and limited access to leadership opportunities acted as barriers to women's political participation. Political parties also gave fewer election tickets to women candidates compared to men, which affected women's entry into Parliament.

The representation of women in the Lok Sabha has gradually increased over time, but the growth has been slow. In the first Lok Sabha elected in 1952, women constituted less than 5

percent of total Members of Parliament. Over the decades, the percentage increased gradually due to rising educational opportunities, women empowerment movements, reservation policies in local governance, and increasing public awareness regarding gender equality.

**Table 1. Growth of Women Representation in Lok Sabha**

Lok Sabha Year	Total Women MPs	Percentage (%)
1952	22	4.4%
1962	31	6.3%
1984	44	8.1%
1999	49	9.0%
2009	59	10.8%
2014	62	11.4%
2019	78	14.4%

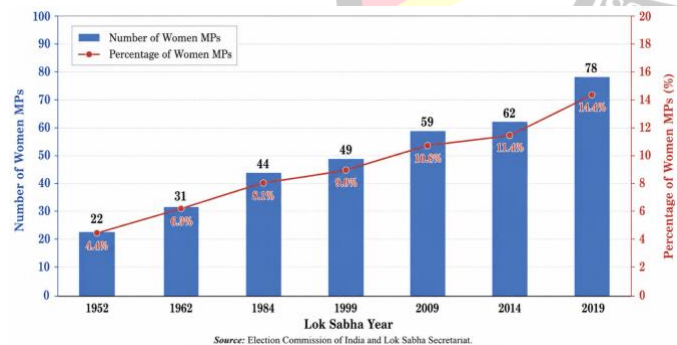


Fig. 1. Growth of Women Representation in Lok Sabha

Source: Election Commission of India and Lok Sabha Secretariat.

The 2019 Lok Sabha election recorded the highest number of women MPs in Indian parliamentary history, reflecting gradual improvement in women's political participation. However, the overall representation still remains below global recommendations for balanced gender representation in democratic institutions.

Women parliamentarians in India have contributed significantly toward raising issues related to:

- women empowerment,
- education,
- healthcare,
- child welfare,
- domestic violence,
- maternity benefits,
- social justice,
- rural development, and
- gender equality.

Women MPs often bring gender-sensitive perspectives into parliamentary debates and policy discussions. Several welfare-

oriented legislations related to women and children have received active support from women parliamentarians. Women representatives have also played important roles in parliamentary committees, policy advocacy, and social welfare programmes.

**Table 2. Major Welfare Legislations Supported by Women Parliamentarians**

Legislation	Year	Focus Area
Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act	2005	Women's Safety
Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act	2013	Workplace Rights
Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act	2017	Maternal Welfare

The Rajya Sabha has also witnessed gradual growth in women's representation, although the percentage remains comparatively low. Women members in the upper house have actively participated in discussions related to constitutional reforms, social welfare legislation, labour rights, education, and public health policies.

Women leaders in India have occupied important constitutional and political positions such as:

- Prime Minister,
- Speaker of Lok Sabha,
- Cabinet Ministers,
- Chief Ministers,
- Governors, and
- Parliamentary Committee Chairs.

Leaders such as Indira Gandhi, Sushma Swaraj, Sonia Gandhi, Meira Kumar, Sumitra Mahajan, Nirmla Sitharaman, and many others have contributed significantly toward strengthening women's visibility in Indian politics.

Despite these achievements, women continue to face several challenges within parliamentary politics. Patriarchal attitudes, political violence, media criticism, unequal distribution of party tickets, lack of campaign funding, and balancing family responsibilities with political careers create obstacles for women representatives. In many cases, women politicians are judged more harshly than male politicians, and their leadership capabilities are often questioned within male-dominated political systems.

The debate regarding women's reservation in Parliament has further highlighted the issue of gender imbalance in political institutions. The Women's Reservation Bill, which aims to reserve seats for women in legislative bodies, has been widely discussed as a mechanism to improve women's political participation and representation. Supporters argue that

reservation can strengthen democratic inclusiveness and encourage more women to enter politics.

Women's representation in Parliament is important not only for achieving numerical equality but also for improving the quality of governance and democratic decision-making. Greater participation of women in Parliament helps ensure that issues related to women, children, healthcare, education, nutrition, and social welfare receive proper attention in policy formulation and legislative discussions.

Thus, women representation in the Indian Parliament reflects both the progress and challenges of gender equality in Indian democracy. Although significant improvements have been observed over time, greater institutional support, leadership opportunities, political inclusion, and social awareness are still required to achieve balanced and effective representation of women in parliamentary institutions.

### Contribution to Social Welfare and Public Policy

Women parliamentarians in India have played an important role in promoting social welfare and influencing public policy related to gender equality, education, healthcare, child development, social justice, and inclusive governance. Their participation in legislative debates, parliamentary committees, welfare discussions, and policy advocacy has contributed toward addressing the social and economic challenges faced by women and marginalized communities. Women representatives often bring people-oriented and welfare-focused perspectives into political decision-making, which strengthens democratic inclusiveness and social development.

Social welfare refers to government initiatives, programmes, and policies designed to improve the quality of life of citizens, especially vulnerable and disadvantaged sections of society. In India, social welfare policies focus on areas such as:

- women empowerment,
- child welfare,
- healthcare,
- nutrition,
- education,
- employment,
- poverty reduction,
- social security, and
- protection of human rights.

Women parliamentarians have actively participated in raising awareness and advocating for such welfare-oriented policies both inside and outside Parliament.

One of the major contributions of women MPs has been their role in promoting legislation related to women's safety and

protection. Women parliamentarians have strongly supported laws addressing domestic violence, workplace harassment, trafficking, child protection, sexual violence, and gender discrimination. Their participation in parliamentary discussions has helped increase public attention toward crimes against women and the need for stronger legal safeguards.

Several important welfare-oriented legislations in India have received active support from women parliamentarians, including:

- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005,
- Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013,
- Prohibition of Child Marriage laws,
- Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017,
- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiatives,
- Child nutrition and welfare programmes,
- Women reservation and empowerment discussions.

Women parliamentarians have also contributed significantly toward healthcare and education policies. Many women MPs have raised issues related to maternal health, reproductive healthcare, menstrual hygiene, malnutrition, vaccination programmes, rural healthcare access, and public health awareness. They have emphasized the importance of improving healthcare facilities for women and children, especially in rural and economically weaker regions.

In the field of education, women parliamentarians have advocated for:

- girls' education,
- reduction of school dropout rates,
- literacy programmes,
- higher education opportunities for women,
- scholarship schemes, and
- safe educational environments for girls.

Their contribution has been particularly important in promoting awareness regarding equal educational opportunities and social empowerment through education.

Women MPs have also played a major role in parliamentary committees related to social justice, women and child development, education, labour welfare, and rural development. Parliamentary committees provide opportunities for detailed policy analysis and recommendations. Through committee participation, women parliamentarians contribute to reviewing government programmes, analysing welfare policies, and recommending reforms related to public welfare and gender equality.

**Table 3. Major Challenges Faced by Women Parliamentarians**

Challenge	Impact
Patriarchal Politics	Reduced leadership opportunities
Financial Constraints	Election barriers
Media Bias	Negative public perception
Party Restrictions	Limited decision-making role

Another important contribution of women parliamentarians is their focus on marginalized and vulnerable groups. Women leaders often raise concerns related to:

- rural women,
- widows,
- economically weaker sections,
- Scheduled Castes,
- Scheduled Tribes,
- minority communities,
- differently-abled persons, and
- children.

Their participation helps ensure that welfare policies address social inequalities and promote inclusive development.

Women parliamentarians have also contributed toward strengthening local governance and women's political participation. Many women leaders support policies encouraging women's representation in Panchayati Raj Institutions and urban local bodies. Reservation policies at local governance levels have increased women's political awareness and leadership participation across rural and urban India.

The role of women parliamentarians became especially important during discussions related to poverty alleviation, employment generation, and social protection schemes. Women MPs have often advocated for:

- self-help groups,
- women entrepreneurship,
- skill development programmes,
- rural employment schemes,
- financial inclusion, and
- economic empowerment initiatives.

These welfare-oriented discussions help improve the socio-economic status of women and contribute toward sustainable development.

Women parliamentarians have also used public platforms and constituency-level activities to spread awareness regarding social welfare schemes and government initiatives. Through interaction with local communities, they help bridge the gap

between policy-making and public implementation. Their role in constituency development often includes promoting education, sanitation, healthcare facilities, women's safety, and welfare awareness campaigns.

Despite these contributions, women parliamentarians continue to face several challenges while influencing public policy. Limited representation, party-based restrictions, patriarchal political culture, unequal access to leadership positions, and lack of financial and institutional support affect their ability to participate fully in decision-making processes. In many cases, women representatives receive less political visibility compared to male leaders.

However, existing academic studies and parliamentary observations indicate that women parliamentarians tend to prioritize social welfare and gender-sensitive governance more actively than traditional power-oriented politics. Their participation contributes toward more inclusive policy discussions and strengthens democratic accountability.

Therefore, the contribution of women parliamentarians to social welfare and public policy in India is highly significant. Their role extends beyond symbolic representation and includes active involvement in promoting welfare-oriented legislation, gender equality, public awareness, and inclusive governance. Increasing women's representation and leadership opportunities in Parliament can further strengthen social justice, democratic participation, and welfare-focused policy-making in India.

#### MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Women parliamentarians play an important role in promoting gender-sensitive governance and welfare-oriented policy discussions in India.
2. The representation of women in the Indian Parliament has gradually increased over the years, but the percentage of women MPs still remains comparatively low in relation to total parliamentary strength.
3. Women Members of Parliament actively raise issues related to:
  - women empowerment,
  - healthcare,
  - education,
  - child welfare,
  - domestic violence,
  - nutrition,
  - social justice, and
  - public welfare.
4. Women parliamentarians contribute significantly toward social welfare legislation and public policy initiatives related to women and marginalized communities.

5. Academic studies indicate that women representatives often focus more on welfare-oriented and people-centered governance compared to traditional power-oriented political approaches.
6. Women MPs help improve democratic inclusiveness by encouraging women's participation in leadership and public decision-making processes.
7. Parliamentary participation of women strengthens awareness regarding gender equality and social rights within society.
8. Women representatives from marginalized communities often raise issues connected with caste inequality, rural development, education, and social justice.
9. Women parliamentarians continue to face multiple barriers such as:
  - patriarchal political culture,
  - unequal access to party leadership,
  - financial constraints,
  - gender stereotypes,
  - media bias,
  - political harassment, and
  - limited representation in decision-making positions.
10. Political parties still provide fewer electoral opportunities and leadership roles to women candidates compared to male politicians.
11. Increased representation of women in Parliament is positively associated with stronger attention toward welfare-oriented governance and gender-sensitive policy-making.
12. Existing literature emphasizes that numerical representation alone is not sufficient; women must also receive meaningful participation and leadership opportunities within political institutions.

### CONCLUSION

Women's participation in Parliament is an essential component of democratic equality, inclusive governance, and social development. The present study concludes that women parliamentarians in India have made important contributions toward promoting gender equality, women empowerment, social welfare, and democratic participation. Their involvement in parliamentary debates, committee discussions, policy advocacy, and welfare-oriented legislation has strengthened public attention toward issues affecting women, children, marginalized communities, and socially disadvantaged groups.

The study highlights that women parliamentarians often introduce gender-sensitive perspectives into governance and policy-making. Their participation has contributed toward raising awareness regarding healthcare, education, women's

safety, child welfare, social justice, and inclusive development. Women representatives also play an important symbolic role by encouraging political awareness and leadership participation among women across society.

At the same time, the study reveals that women parliamentarians continue to face significant social, political, and institutional barriers. Patriarchal political structures, unequal access to leadership opportunities, financial limitations, media stereotypes, and underrepresentation in decision-making positions continue to restrict women's political effectiveness. Although constitutional equality exists, practical inequalities still affect women's representation and influence within Parliament.

The review further concludes that increasing women's representation alone is not enough to achieve substantive gender equality in politics. Women must also receive equal opportunities for leadership, policy influence, organizational participation, and parliamentary decision-making. Strong institutional support and gender-inclusive political reforms are necessary to improve the effectiveness of women parliamentarians in governance.

Overall, the study concludes that women parliamentarians are important agents of social transformation and democratic inclusiveness in India. Their growing participation has positively influenced welfare-oriented governance and public policy discussions. However, further efforts are required to strengthen women's political representation and ensure meaningful participation in parliamentary democracy.

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